

# **AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

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An introduction to philosophy by Holly Estil Cunningham

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**HOLLY ESTIL CUNNINGHAM**

**AN INTRODUCTION  
TO PHILOSOPHY**



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LES BY  
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TO  
MY FIRST TEACHERS OF PHILOSOPHY  
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED  
BY  
THEIR SON





## PREFACE

THE chief purposes of this work are (a) to present the student with a method of studying problems of the type of those discussed in philosophy especially and in the social sciences generally, and (b) to acquaint him with the fundamental movements and problems of philosophy. The immature student usually leaves his early courses with the feeling that he has gained little of value and that everything is "up in the air." He has come from the study of the exact sciences and mathematics, and to tackle the problems of philosophy directly when there is no method in sight for handling them creates the feeling that he is beating thin air. The experience of the average student is seldom such as to render him sympathetic with the great problems of philosophy—he is too full of the concrete affairs of the world to stop to theorize and speculate; and his past training in the exact sciences and mathematics renders him suspicious of any procedure that does not approximate the exactness that prevails in the world he knows. The problems themselves generally seem too far away and too indefinite. Consequently, both from the standpoint of method and problem, matters appear alien, and students are driven away from the further study of philosophy. Later in experience indefiniteness may be looked upon, and rightfully so possibly, as a thing to be desired.

With these two ideas uppermost, this text attempts to furnish a method, the genetical-inductive, not only in theory but in the actual handling of the subject matter of the book

itself; and to show that the problems of philosophy are not something far removed "from the crowd's ignoble strife," but that they grow out of the conditions of the actual life of the people. It is not at all claimed that these are new ideas, but it does seem that they have not been sufficiently emphasized in introductory courses, and, indeed, in the literature of certain "fixed" varieties of philosophy. If too much emphasis is placed on these ideas it is because of the lack of it in many other works.

It is also hoped that the linking up of philosophy with the affairs of life will aid in the direction of rendering it a more vital force in the affairs of this world—in the rendering of knowledge of philosophy power in man's world.

Acknowledgments are due to a large group of men whose lectures I have been fortunate enough to attend, to those patient students whose works I have frequently cited, and to my wife who has helped at every turn in the preparation of the manuscript.

HOLLY ESTIL CUNNINGHAM.

The University of Oklahoma,  
September 1, 1919.

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